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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the proceedings of a 1991 meeting of the Council for Cultural Cooperation's Educational Research Workshop on gifted children and adolescents. Introductory material briefly summarizes the nature of the meeting, aims of the workshop, and opening addresses (by the Rector of the University of Nijmegen (The Netherlands), the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Chairman of the Workshop, and a representative of the Council of Europe). Then, the seven commissioned papers are listed as are reports from the following nations: Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Malta, Rumania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia. Ten recommendations of the meeting are given. These addressed: the importance of individual differences, the special problems of gifted females, provisions within the regular school system, instructional development, teacher training, acceleration, special classes, research needs, and parents' associations. Appendixes list the participants, and present the reports of the three discussion groups. (DB)

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

Educational Research Workshop on gifted children
and adolescents - Research and education in Europe
Nijmegen, 23-26 July 1991

SECRETARIAT REPORT

prepared by the Directorate of Education, Culture
and Sport, Section for Educational Research

1. NATURE OF THE MEETING

An Educational Research Workshop organised by the Centre for the
Study of Giftedness (Centre des études sur les doués) at the
University of Nijmegen in co-operation with:

- the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) of the Council of
Europe;
- the Dutch Ministry of Education and Science;
- the Institute for Educational Research in the Netherlands
(SVO).

2. PLACE AND DATES

Nijmegen, 23-26 July 1991.

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3. AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP

- 3.1 To identify and discuss research on gifted children and adolescents and how best to promote their talents;
- 3.2 To define neglected areas of research in this field;
- 3.3 To draw conclusions from research available so far: what action may be suggested to educational policy-makers, teacher education and INSET institutions, support agencies for teachers at national, regional and local level and teachers.
- 3.4 To sound possibilities of co-operation among participating research workers and their institutes.

4. PARTICIPANTS

See attached list (Appendix I).

5. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The following welcome addresses were given:

5.1 On behalf of the University

Professor Dr. A. J. M. PLASSCHAERT, Rector of the University, welcomed the participants on behalf of the University of Nijmegen, expressed his satisfaction about the great number of participants from Central and Eastern Europe and stressed the University's interest in the theme of support to the gifted, illustrated by the creation of the Centre for the Study of Giftedness. He hoped to see certain recommendations for educational policy.

5.2 On behalf of the Faculty of Social Sciences

Professor Dr. J. M. H. VOSSEN, Dean of the Faculty, underlined the Faculty's interest to stimulate the development of new branches of social sciences, such as research into giftedness (creation of a Chair for the development of the gifted child and of the Centre for the Study of Giftedness; development of a university course on giftedness; elaboration of projects and games for gifted children in primary schools).

5.3 On behalf of the Centre for the Study of Giftedness

Professor Dr. F. MONKS (Chairman of the Workshop) referred to

- the first Dutch national conference on giftedness held in Nijmegen in 1984 as an event stimulating further developments;
- the Dutch association of parents of gifted children called PHAROS (founded in 1987);
- the creation of the Chair and Centre for the Study of Giftedness in 1988;
- growing public awareness of the need for a differentiated curriculum to meet the needs of gifted children.

He stressed the following aims of the Workshop:

- to identify the state of the art in research on giftedness;
- to draw up an inventory of relevant educational measures and to compare different approaches;
- to make proposals for relevant training of teachers, psychologists, etc.;
- to draw conclusions for educational policy.

Close co-operation among research workers, teachers and policy-makers was vital.

Furthermore, Professor MÖNKS drew attention to the interest in this issue shown by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and the suggestion to compare national legislation and practice with regard to the right to differentiated education.

The political support of the Assembly for improved measures to help the gifted would be highly appreciated.

Professor MÖNKS thanked the Council of Europe, the Dutch and the Federal German Ministry of Education and the Netherlands Institute for Educational Research (SV0) for their support and co-operation in organising the Workshop.

5.4 On behalf of the Council of Europe

Mr. M. VORBECK also thanked the various partners involved (Centre for the Study of Giftedness, Dutch Ministry, German Federal Ministry, SV0) for their efforts and explained that the Workshop was part of a series of educational research meetings organised by the Council of Europe since 1975. The Workshops were meant to make European research workers aware of each other's work and findings and to let policy-makers profit from research results from all over Europe. For the fifth time a Workshop was being held in the Netherlands.

Interest in the theme of special support for gifted children and adolescents had risen considerably in the last few years; no country could afford to waste talents. Young people should be helped to develop all their talents; the term of giftedness should not be limited to those having high IQ scores and performing very well in the mother tongue and mathematics. Giftedness was a multidimensional concept; giftedness as high or outstanding achievement was the result of a successful interaction between the individual's capabilities and the environment. Abilities of high achievement might concern intellectual, artistic, psychomotor and/or social performances.

Some pupils tended to progress more slowly, others more quickly, that the average and both needed help. Premature children with high ability could often be found among lower-class children, underprivileged groups (e.g. disabled, migrants) and were often marginalised, rejected by their peers and classified as stupid or hopeless by their teachers.

Mr. VORBECK stressed that the conclusions might ideally reach 100-200 Ministers of Education in the 29 countries taking part in the work of the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation. The list of participants illustrated the enormous variety of educational systems represented at the Workshop. The enormous number of contributions to the Workshop reflected the general interest in the topic.

6. ORGANISATION OF THE WORKSHOP

6.1 Commissioned papers

The following commissioned papers were presented in plenary session and discussed in three working groups (see their reports in Appendices II, III and IV).

- No. 1: "Concepts of Giftedness and Research into the Education of Gifted Children in the Netherlands," by Prof. Pieter SPAN, Netherlands (DECS/Rech (91) 35)
- No. 2: "Intellectually and Educationally Advanced Children: A few Theoretical and Practical Indicators on the Situation in Switzerland and France," by Laurence RIEBEN, Switzerland (DECS/Rech (91) 17)
- No. 3: "Research on Gifted and Talented Children in Spain: an Overview," by Candido GENOVARD, Spain (DECS/Rech (91) 32)
- No. 4: "State of the Art of Giftedness Research and the German Part of Education of the Gifted and Talented Youth," by Prof. Dr. Kurt HELLER, Germany (DECS/Rech (91) 10/11)
- No. 5: "Problems of the Education of Gifted Children in the Countries of Mid-East Europe," by Andrzej SEKOWSKI, Poland (DECS/Rech (91) 66)
- No. 6: "Recent Development for the Highly Able in Britain," by Joan FREEMAN, United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 16)
- No. 7: "Can early Reading lead to Academic Prowess ?" by Prof. Dr. Ake W. EDFELDT, Sweden (DECS/Rech (91) 43)

7. INDIVIDUAL OR NATIONAL REPORTS TABLED AS BACKGROUND MATERIAL

AUSTRIA

"Programmes for Highly Able Children in Austria," by Barbara GRILLMAYR, Austria (DECS/Rech (91) 25)

BULGARIA

"Cognitive Style and Creativity: Field Independence Problem-Solving and Imagination," by Alexandra PENOVA, Bulgaria (DECS/Rech (91) 48)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

"Mathematical Giftedness - Some Questions to be Answered," by
Vladimir **BURJAN**, Czechoslovakia (DECS/Rech (91) 23)

"The Research of Talents in Slovakia," by Vladimir **DOCKEL**
Jolana **LAZNIBATOVA** and Thomas **KOVAC**, Czechoslovakia
(DECS/Rech (91) 38)

DENMARK

"Instructional Individualisation," by Mogens **JANSEN**, Denmark
(DECS/Rech (90) 63)

"Different Pupils - Different Teaching," by Mogens **JANSEN**,
Denmark (DECS/Rech (91) 34)

FINLAND

"Teaching Gifted Children and Adolescents and Related Research
in Finland," by Jauni **VÄLIJÄRVI**, Finland (DECS/Rech (91) 33)

FRANCE

"Eurotalent's Activities, Eurotalent's 1st International
Congress, Barcelona, 28-31 August 1989," by Jean **BRUNAUT**, France
(DECS/Rech (91) 28)

"EUROTALENT: Research, Experiments, Proposals, What is being done
in Europe for Gifted Young People," by Jean **BRUNAUT**, France
(DECS/Rech (91) 55)

"An Educational Project for Exceptionally Gifted Children," by
Gilles **DESCHAMPS**, France (DECS/Rech (90) 64)

"Gifted Children - Research and Education in France," by
Jean-Charles **TERRASIER**, France (DECS/Rech (91) 30)

"The Exceptionally Gifted," by the **Syndicat National des
Instituteurs et Professeurs de Collège** (French National Union of
Primary and Lower Secondary School Teachers) A contribution to
the conference debate in Nice on 7 October 1987

GERMANY

"German Research on Giftedness," by Gertrude **MEHLHORN**, Germany
(DECS/Rech (91) 21)

"Research on Giftedness - Information on Three German Projects,"
by Colleen **NEITZKE**, Germany (DECS/Rech (91) 42)

"Research in Germany. Analysis of the Living Environment of
Highly Gifted Primary School Children," by Detlef H. **ROST**,
Germany (DECS/Rech (91) 6)

MALTA

"An Examination of Some Factors Affecting the Achievement of
Gifted Persons," by J. **CILIA**, Malta (DECS/Rech (91) 5)

ROUMANIA

"Support for People with High Mental Ability," by Carmen CRETU, Roumania (DECS/Rech (91) 40)

"Gifted Children and Teenagers. Bibliography," by Biblioteca Centrale Pedagogica, Roumania (DECS/Rech (91) 14)

SPAIN

"Knowledge of Declared Interest in School Textbooks. Neuro-biochemical and Behavioural Indicators for Early Identification," by Javier BERCHE CRUZ, Spain (DECS/Rech (91) 22)

SWITZERLAND

"Gifted, Super-Gifted, Under-Stretched," by H. STRICKER, Switzerland (DECS/Rech (91) 24)

TURKEY

"Inanç Lycée - A Provision for the Intellectually Gifted Children of Economically Disadvantaged Families," by Fusun AKARSU, Turkey (DECS/Rech (91) 20)

"Situation in Turkey," by Nail SAHIN, Turkey (DECS/Rech (91) 53)

UNITED KINGDOM

"Gifted Girls: A Case of Wasted Talent ? British Research," by Rosemary AYLES, United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 31)

"The Education of Very Able Children in Maintained Schools in England," by D. C. McINTOSH, United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 64)

"Developing the Talents and Competences of All Our Children," by John RAVEN, United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 37)

"The Raven Progressive Matrices in Gifted Education," by John RAVEN, United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 4)

"Managing Education for Effectiveness," by John RAVEN, United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 2)

"Report," by Michael J. E. SHORT, United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 39)

"Report on the work of the National Association for Curriculum Enrichment and Extension (NACE) in the United Kingdom," United Kingdom (DECS/Rech (91) 49)

USSR

"Support to Gifted Pupils in Azerbaijan," by Vagif G. ALEKPEROV, USSR (DECS/Rech (91) 13)

"Organisation Model of the Selection, Education and Development of Creative Abilities of Gifted Children in the Republic of Azerbaijan," by Vagif G. ALEKPEROV, USSR (DECS/Rech (91) 60)

"Possibilities of Acceleration of the Intellectual Development of Pre-School Children," by O. M. KLEMENTYEVA and R. H. TUGUSHER, USSR (DECS/Rech (91) 12)

"The First Sage of the Munich-Moscow Longitudinal Study of Giftedness," by I. S. AVERINA and H. I. SCHEBLANOVA (DECS/Rech (91) 59)

YUGOSLAVIA

"Gifted Children and Adolescents, Research and Education in Yugoslavia," by Slavia B. MAKSIC, Yugoslavia (DECS/Rech (91) 9)

"Research in Yugoslavia," by Slavia B. MAKSIC, Yugoslavia (DECS/Rech (91) 8)

"Research on and Education of the Gifted Youth in Yugoslavia," by Slavia B. MAKSIC, Yugoslavia (DECS/Rech (91) 63)

"Modelling of the Teaching Process in Physics to Meet the Needs of Pupils Specially Gifted in Physics," by Hasnija MURATOVIC, Yugoslavia (DECS/Rech (91) 19)

"Mentoring the Gifted Child: The Case of Yugoslavia," Norbert JAUSOVEC, Yugoslavia (DECS/Rech (91) 57)

8. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the seven commissioned papers, the debate in plenary and in group sessions, Drs van BOXTEL (Rapporteur General) summed up the Workshop findings on the morning of the last day. The full text of his report will be made available under document DECS/Rech (91) 76.

From the Rapporteur General's point of view, the following recommendations were made:

1. In legislation individual differences have to be recognised and respected on the basis of individual human rights; gifted individuals need adequate educational opportunities to develop their full potential.
2. The special and unfavourable position of gifted women and girls needs additional attention.
3. Preferably, provisions for the gifted and talented have to be arranged within the regular school system in the form of flexible curricula, internal differentiation and enrichment activities.
4. There is a great need for the development of adequate enrichment activities, special curricula and learning material for the gifted.
5. Adequate and effective teacher training is essential; differentiation in favour of the gifted should be a core element of all initial teacher training courses and supplementary programmes of in-service training in this area are badly needed.

6. Acceleration in the form of early entrance and grade skipping is acceptable in individual cases in the absence of more suitable measures, provided that it is arranged in agreement between school, parents and child.
7. Special schools and classes for the gifted, in isolation from their peer group, are only acceptable with regard to a very limited scope of special talents (e.g. music and the performing arts).
8. Fundamental research in the field of giftedness has to be stimulated as a necessary basis for applied research.
9. Applied research is badly needed in respect of identification strategies and provisions for the gifted; results should be made more effective through initial and in-service teacher training.
10. Parents' associations and private initiatives in favour of the gifted should be encouraged.

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In his final remarks, Mr. VORBECK thanked Professor Dr. MÖNKS for his excellent co-operation in preparing and organising the Workshop. He also thanked the Rapporteur General, the lecturers, the group chairmen and rapporteurs and all the Secretariat staff involved, for their help and support.

10. FUTURE WORK

The Council of Europe will send to participants both the present Secretariat Report, as well as Drs van BOXTEL's Final Report in both English and French.

A selection of the Workshop papers is likely to be published (in English only) by Swets & Zeitlinger, Lisse, Holland, around 1992. Participants are encouraged to give publicity to the English and French versions of the Workshop documents.

APPENDIX I/ANNEXE I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS/LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDIX II

REPORT OF GROUP 1

Chairmen: Mr. J. C. TERRASSIER, Mr. J. BERCHE and
Ms L. RIEBEN
Rapporteur: Mr. J. BRUNAUT

1. THE INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED CHILD AND THE SCHOOL

1.1 The situation

Most countries in Europe still have a rigid school system which does not allow the children to express the diversity of their gifts. Research workers, psychologists and teachers note this diversity when watching the children developing and learning at extremely different rates. It is vital to accept each child in its individuality. How can an educational system justify determining children and their schooling only on the basis of their date of birth? Such an attitude makes an educational system unworthy and bad.

1.2 Proposals

The diversity implies various educational approaches. Based on research and experience present in the group the following proposals, supplementing each other, were made:

- The educational system should offer provision for the fullest possible development of a child's potential.
- The rate of progress at school suggested to each child should necessarily take account of its possibilities.
- The various educational measures proposed by the experts: i.e. enrichment at school, in-depth study of subject matter, acceleration, classes adapted to the needs of gifted children, tutoring out-of-school enrichment are considered more favourable than uniform teaching for all.
- Educational legislation must recognise and respect the fact that children are different. The school system is there to serve the child and not the other way round. If one of the two is to survive, it should be the child rather than the system.

2. THE TYPE OF TEACHERS NEEDED FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Does care for gifted children require special curricula, special material and special teacher education?

What is most important is teacher education. Teachers should learn to offer gifted children a variety of choices and individualised educational care.

Gifted children differ with regard to:

- learning speed;
- degree of depth in learning;
- learning style.

This means that teachers should be made aware of these different characteristics.

To meet the needs of gifted children teachers must have an open mind, high self-esteem, know their limits, be willing to learn together with the child, to favour independent learning, be motivated, focus on the learning rather than the teaching process.

Two patterns of teacher education were identified: The first would be to select and qualify those teachers interested in working with gifted children. The second would be to make all teachers aware of these problems, both in initial and continued education, because all will, as a rule, have to work with gifted children.

Involvement of people from outside the school and experts from the various fields will also contribute to opening the child's mind. In any case teacher education is vital. Development of research should be one of the priorities in order to facilitate relevant teacher education.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND INTELLECTUALLY PRECOCIOUS CHILDREN

Genuine knowledge of a gifted child also implies the study of eventual peculiarities of its neurophysiological functioning. There is research evidence showing the link between behavioural data and indicators illustrating the development of the central system of nerves. Research should be promoted which might help to come to a better understanding of all children.

The choice of method for identifying gifted children depends on the educational and social context. Educational systems have to face two legitimate but contradictory demands:

- On the one hand, to allow each gifted child, regardless of its origin, to develop its gifts to the fullest.
- On the other hand, to favour a certain social homogeneity.

The examples of identification practised in the various countries presented in the group show an enormous variety of methods and objectives. In Eastern European countries, having developed special schools or classes for gifted children, school achievement tests prevail. In most of the other countries the identification of gifted children is done less systematically. Intelligence tests are only applied at certain moment, e.g. when the child's situation attracts the teacher's or parents' attention.

Identification methods still need improvement, in order to come to a better knowledge of each child's potential.

It may be hoped that more flexible curricula will be adopted to meet the individual gifts of each child, whilst respecting the principle of equal opportunities for all.

APPENDIX III

REPORT OF GROUP 2

Chairperson: Mr. M. SHORT

Rapporteurs: Mr. D. McINTOSH and Mrs. M. ROBINSON

1. TRAINING OF TEACHERS (Laurence Rieben - Question C2)

- 1.1 It is essential that differentiation should be a core element of all initial teacher training courses.
- 1.2 Teachers require strategies to enable them to cope with classes consisting of pupils with a wide range of abilities.
- 1.3 Teacher training courses should provide students with an awareness of the needs of gifted children and should endeavour to dispel any negative images of giftedness which may already have been acquired.
- 1.4 Programmes of in-service training in this area are essential to supplement the limited provision within initial training courses and to provide support for serving teachers, some of whom may have had no previous relevant training.
- 1.5 To be effective, such training needs to be carried out by those with both enthusiasm and expertise in the field of gifted education.
- 1.6 Some post-graduate courses are ineffective in influencing practice in the classroom. It is not always easy to translate the results of research into practical application. Opportunities for teachers and researchers to work together with pupils can be very helpful.
- 1.7 Teachers need to be aware of the importance of pupils' own interests which may indicate strengths not hitherto revealed. It is also important to recognise the value of tapping the expertise available within the community.

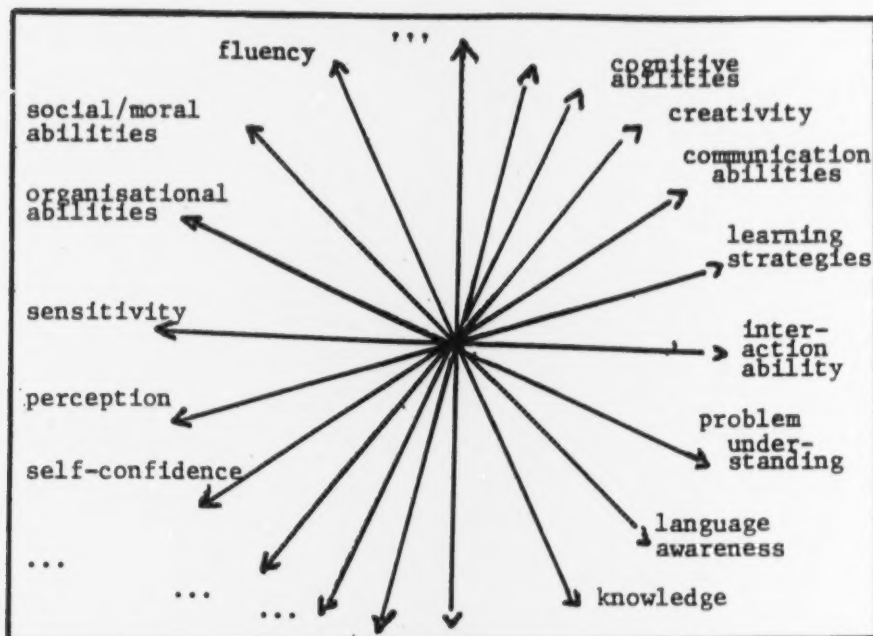
2. DIFFERENTIATION (Laurence Rieben - Question B3)

- 2.1 Flexible teaching and learning styles are necessary if the teacher is to cater effectively for the needs of all the pupils in one class. This flexibility is difficult to achieve in countries where a fairly rigid curriculum is in operation.
- 2.2 Relationships between teacher and learner are crucial, if teaching style and learning style are to be effectively matched.

- 2.3 The difficulty of catering for a wide range of recognised abilities. Careful management of teaching and non-teaching staff is essential and this may include a variety of team teaching approaches. Enrichment programmes, properly managed, can be valuable and can make an impact on a wide cohort of pupils. The possible negative social consequences of teaching pupils in isolation from their peer groups needs careful consideration.
- 2.4 Many teachers have a restricted view of what is meant by differentiation. There needs to be a greater understanding about the variety of ways of differentiating work for pupils of different abilities.
3. **EARLY DETECTION OF THE HIGHLY GIFTED** (K. Heller - Question C1)
EARLY PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPMENT (Question C2)
- 3.1 Parents need to learn more about the early stages of child development in order to help them recognise signs of high potential. Research has shown that what happens at the pre-natal stages can be of vital importance. Close liaison between parents and health workers at both pre- and post-natal stages would be beneficial. Education for parenthood should be an important aspect of secondary schooling.
- 3.2 All parents should be aware of the need for children to be given regular planned contact time. Within this time, physical human contact, e.g. touching, hugging, "listening with eyes", etc. is of crucial importance.
- 3.3 It was questioned whether the formal identification of gifted children might be an outdated process. There are arguments against "packaging" pupils in this way. Teachers need to become more reflective, adopting a technique of ongoing observation and using a repertoire of assessment and evaluation processes, in order to build up a profile of the child.
- 3.4 Pupils' strengths cannot be identified without their having already been developed in some way. Many parents are not able to support such developments. (Reference was made to a compensatory programme, which included emotional support, introduced in kindergartens in Germany. Pupils involved demonstrated increased intellectual and creative activity.)
- 3.5 The development of sensory perception is critical in early childhood. This needs to become more finely tuned in all five senses as time progresses.
- 3.6 A rapid approach to completing a task may not necessarily be a sign of giftedness. Some gifted pupils like to become absorbed in a task for a period of several hours, indicating sustained concentration and a degree of dedication.
4. **NURTURING THE GIFTED IN THE REGULAR SCHOOL SYSTEM OR OUTSIDE**
(K. Heller - Question 3)
- 4.1 In the planning of work, the aims, methods, places and processes are usually identified by the teacher. Correction is often negative. Students need to recognise the importance of what they are doing. The introduction of opportunities for children to evaluate their own work is important.

- 4.2 Concern was expressed that pilot projects in gifted education often have an influence only in the institutions in which they are run. There is frequently no attempt to disseminate results through in-service courses. [Reference was made to the progress in the UK with the introduction of GCSE (The General Certificate of Secondary Education) and the National Curriculum. The impact of the relevant training helped teachers to introduce a wider range of teaching strategies and class organisation.]
- 4.3 Ordinary schools can cater for gifted pupils partly through differentiation, partly through enrichment and partly through providing more flexible programmes of study which are not always age-related but which still provide contact with peers. However, the way in which classes are organised in different countries may depend on a combination of educational, ideological and economic factors.
- 4.4 The value of special courses is recognised. These can be more effective if they can contribute to pupils' progress within mainstream education and are not one-off isolated activities.
- 4.5 Where teachers are aware of the needs of gifted children and are providing open-ended questions/lateral thinking skills/specially designed programmes, the standards are raised for all children.
5. IDENTIFICATION OF GC (reference to Information Memorandum DECS/Rech (90) 15 - 3.1 - Definition)
 - 5.1 Profile should be built up using information from all adults involved with the child in conjunction with information obtained from carefully administered objective tests. Use of checklists needs to be handled with discretion.
 - 5.2 It is important to have a global perspective on research with the sharing of ideas of good, tried and tested approaches.
 - 5.3 There needs to be greater collaboration between researchers and practitioners. The practitioners need to identify the questions which need to be addressed. There is a need to bring together methodological know-how, pedagogical understanding and practical support. Research into profiles of abilities would be helpful.
 - 5.4 Teachers need to have knowledge about the existential consequences of culture, disability, gender and educational disadvantage.

GIFTEDNESS IS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPT



?		?		?	
?	?		?	?	
?	?				?
special interests	cognitive abilities	practical abilities	social/emotional /... abilities	organizational abilities	special activities

* How can we come from a "multidimensional concept" to the knowledge of individual profiles of our children and students in order to develop practical methods to foster them all ?

* How can the awareness of a normal teacher be fostered to make him aware of the abilities and interests of his pupils ?

- * What kind of support do teachers need to organise "adequate" learning situations so that pupils can "show" their abilities and interests ?
- * What is the crucial information (elements, categories, criteria, etc.) teachers should have ? Which of them are they able to find for themselves ?
- * Are there evaluated methods to help different "types" and "profiles", to foster them in a "normal class" ?

APPENDIX IV
REPORT OF GROUP 3

Chairperson: Barbara GRILLMAYR
Rapporteur: Carl Jürgen LTENBORN

1. POSSIBLE DEFINITIONS FOR HIGH ABILITY

1.1 Social scale in respect of age groups (most common):

2-3% of the age cohort.

1.2 Ideal norm (as a basis: expertise)

Problem: in this case only adults could be considered as highly gifted.

1.3 Subjective norm: comparison of individual performance over a given period of development.

1.4 Problems:

1.4.1 So far only quantitative factors have been taken into consideration, e.g. fast comprehension (so-called four-minute children), high transfer ability.

1.4.2 Means of measuring creativity have also been basically quantitative (number of possible solutions within one given task).

1.4.3 In the long run the mere production of ideas (originality) without operational implementation would not be sufficient to identify high ability.

2. IDENTIFICATION

2.1 No model has been discussed, but possible indicators and their signification for the practice could be: leisure-time activities, abnormal behaviour, school is found boring, child is fed up with school.

2.2 Advice for parents and teachers has been published by the German Federal Ministry for Education ("Finden und Fördern besonders begabter Kinder". Bock-Verlag, Bad Honnef), (Finding and Supporting of Highly Gifted Children). To be ordered free of charge from the Ministry's Public Relations Department.

3. TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HETEROGENEOUS AND HOMOGENEOUS GROUPS

3.1 Problems in distinguishing both groups:

- Homogeneous groups quickly turn into heterogeneous ones.
- Diminishing homogeneity in the course of development.

3.2 No consensus has been found for the ideal time of differentiation. The moment for external differentiation is controversial. Fear of non-acceptance by the previous peer group, social integration of the highly gifted.

3.3 Distinction of field specific giftedness and general high ability.

4. ENRICHMENT AND ACCELERATION

4.1 In practice both means are combined, whereas acceleration stands the chance of being more effective (e.g. internal differentiation in class, skipping a class according to pupil's wish, parents' attitude, teacher's opinion and the social environment).

4.2 Importance of self-controlled learning processes (especially in leisure-time).

4.3 Example of good practice: Youth Centre "Christophorus-School".

5. CREATIVITY (cf. 1.4.2/1.4.3)

5.1 Abstract creativity does not exist; creativity depends on the specific field.

5.2 Distinction between "inventors" and "adaptors".

5.3 Adolescents experience every kind of restriction as an obstacle to their creativity.

5.4 Some pressure can be helpful in implementing ideas.

5.5 Necessity to distinguish between divergent and convergent thinking.

6. SOCIAL BACKGROUND

6.1 Family background (parents' level of education, intact family structure).

6.2 Acceptance of peers, etc.

6.3 Measures concerning groups at risk (need for test-diagnostic methods).

7. SEX-SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

7.1 Impact of the traditional female role.

7.2 Differences even in leisure-time activity.

Girls: wide range of interests, boys: concentration on one or two hobbies.

Consequence: Improved self-consciousness, which reflects on the personality as a whole.

8. HIGH ABILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Giftedness is no claim to social privilege, but to social responsibility, interrelationship between optimal development of individual ability and a prosperous society.

9. CONSEQUENCES FOR INITIAL AND CONTINUED TEACHER EDUCATION

- 9.1 Participation of pupils in the choice of course material and selecting working methods.
- 9.2 Differentiation of class-room teaching.
- 9.3 Information about leisure-time behaviour of pupils (some of them might not be challenged, consequence for teachers' work).

10. MODERN LANGUAGE LEARNING

- 10.1 Balance between mother-tongue competence and multilingual communicative skills offering great opportunities.
- 10.2 Motivating learning methods, creation of stimulating learning environment.